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January 31, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: COINS

Following the December meeting of PFIAE you asked me to look into COINS and to make recommendations. At the start, I talked with ADDSET and ADDI, both of whom expect that you will eventually appoint a CIA person to counsel with me and perhaps an ASD(I) representative so as to come to a final recommendation. This memorandum is therefore not coordinated for that reason and because you put no specific constraints on me in this regard.

As a basis for forming recommendations, I felt the need to understand specifically what CIA and industry are doing in information handling systems (IHS). From industry, I sought some measures of effectiveness or value systems by which to evaluate IHS; I sought also taxonomies of hardware (computers, peripheral equipment, remote terminals) and software systems (i.e., actual tasks to be performed) which might help give an understanding of intelligence community IHS needs. Because of his intense interest, I talked with Dr. William C. Baker and visited Bell Telephone Laboratories (of which he is President), to learn of their accomplishments. I revisited the White House Situation Room (WHSR) which Dr. Baker considers, I believe, a jewel.

In sum:

1. The CIA is making competitively good use of IHS in a number of applications, and it is clear from this that the organizational and technical talent is available to respond to expressed needs of analysts. What is lacking -- under my assumption that the intelligence community must use IHS more widely and cooperatively -- is a demand by analysts for help. This is so, I believe, because the analytical methodologies which might cause the demand are only rudimentary and slow of acceptance.

2. With respect to industry, concepts for other than dollar-based value systems and for taxonomies for IHS are not developed, in fact hardly even considered. Usually IHS are sold because they save money, or because the job could not otherwise be done. With respect to intelligence analysis and dissemination, neither of these can be convincingly demonstrated and as a consequence what might be done (presumably usefully) has not been done.

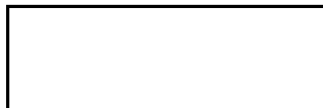
3. With respect to BTL and WHSR some remarkable and interesting IHS have been or are being implemented. Although the work of the intelligence community is characterized by a data base perhaps 100 to 1000 times larger than what I saw at either place, both have or are approaching a sophistication which could be applicable in the intelligence community. (I recommend you visit the WHSR: HAK will soon be automated for a number of intelligence and information functions.)

From my study of the situation and from the counsel of the USIB IHC and BICINT Committee Chairmen, I conclude that IHS must come more into intelligence analysis and dissemination. There is no way to get from COINS (the narrow experiment) to where the intelligence community could and should get: there is too much complexity, diversity and unevenness of management, hardware, communications and languages. We should cut our losses in COINS (as such) and start now to make a unified approach to present activities and proposed initiatives. The unified approach should be made, not in staffs such as USIB committees, ICS or ASD(I) but in a line office of an appropriate agency. IHC could however provide transition assistance, continuing support, and a sense of community participation. The approach should start by defining requirements in terms of elaborations of the concepts at CIA, WHSR, State, NSA, DIA and BTL; in terms of the new analytical methodologies the IC is attempting to develop; and in terms of the men and dollars you are willing to apply.

There will be problems still: security, communications, large funding. Some problems will remain but will be more susceptible of solution: quality of files, "cultural mismatch." Still others will go away or be greatly ameliorated: languages diversity, interactive capability, need, training.

These ideas have not been tested within the intelligence community. You will be faced I believe with differing -- even very different -- views. These differences are fundamental: short of duplicating the "short course refresher" I have taken, and coming to your own conclusions, I don't know how to resolve them at this moment other than by fiat and I recommend against that.

I do recommend that you direct formation of a single-agency, full-time task force -- of about six persons and of about three months' duration -- which has no other responsibilities, has funds for contract research and analysis and is charged with carrying out a typical Phase I study. I believe that either CIA or NSA could provide suitable talent and environment for the task. The cost of what I suggest would be about \$100K total. This is moderate enough that if either agency could not handle it, you might fund out of ODCL. Such a study would yield specifications of capability, costs, schedules, contractor candidates and the like. You could then decide after receiving community advice whether and to what degree you wanted to proceed with an up-to-date community on-line intelligence system.



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